

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Final Office Action of September 28, 2006 (Office Action). As this response is timely filed within the three-month shortened statutory period, no fee is believed due. The Office, nonetheless, is expressly authorized to charge any deficiencies or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-0951.

As an initial matter, Applicants thank the Examiner for his thorough review of the Application and for noting at page 2 of the Office Action that the previous rejection has been withdrawn pursuant to Applicants' Amendment and Remarks submitted July 13, 2006. In the present Office Action, Claims 1-4 and 10-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over the newly-cited reference, U.S. Patent No. 7,069,235 to Postelnik, *et al.* (hereinafter Postelnik).

Applicants have amended independent Claims 1 and 4 to further emphasize certain aspects of Applicants' invention. Applicants have also amended dependent Claim 13 to correct a typographical error. As discussed herein, the claim amendments are supported throughout the Specification and no new matter has been introduced by the amendments.

I. Applicants' Invention

It may be useful to reiterate certain aspects of Applicants' invention prior to addressing the cited reference. One embodiment of the invention, typified by Claim 1, is a method for exposing transaction status in a supply chain formed by disparate trading partner systems. The method can include electronically receiving, in a trading partner exchange, a notification of an order created in a first trading partner system, where the order created describes a transaction between a customer and the first trading partner. The received notification can be associated with a first trading partner system identifier.

Additionally, the method can include the trading partner exchange electronically receiving at least one activity notification from at least one second trading partner system. The received notification can be associated with a second trading partner system

identifier. The at least one activity notification can be configured to describe an action taken with respect to the transaction and having a second trading partner system identifier, where the first and at least a second trading partner systems jointly define a transaction processing chain.

According to the method, the trading partner exchange can associate the unique transaction identifier with the first and at least a second trading partner system identifiers. Furthermore, according to the method, the trading partner exchange can then link the order creation notification and any subsequent order activity notification with the unique identifier. (See, e.g., Specification, p. 5, line 6 - p. 6, line 2; p. 8, lines 7-14; and p. 10, line 13 - p.13, line 8.) By cross referencing the first and second trading partner system identifiers using the unique transaction identifier, a status of the transaction at a point in the transaction processing chain can be provided according to the method. (See, e.g., Specification, p. 8, lines 18-20; and p. 13, lines 9-16.) Additionally, the trading partner exchange can electronically report, at any logical point in the transaction processing chain, the status of the transaction. Status can be reported to any of the trading partners associated with the transaction, according to the method, via an integrated access interface.

II. The Claims Define Over The Prior Art

As already noted, each of the claims was rejected as being unpatentable over Postelnik. Postelnik is directed to systems and methods for multi-source transaction processing receiving order requests from a client system operated by a user. In particular, Postelnik requires an order servicing system that accepts orders from a user, according to some established criteria, and divides an order requiring multiple suppliers into multiple orders.

On page 2 of the Office Action, it is stated that Postelnik discloses the supply chain as described in the present invention. However, Postelnik discloses that all

transactions take place through an order servicing system. (See, e.g., Abstract, FIG. 4). As such, the supply chain of Postelnik includes not only customers, clients, order request servicing organizations, and one or more fulfillment partners, but also an order servicing system, as all transactions between any buyer and any seller using the method of Postelnik must necessarily go through an order servicing system. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Postelnik fails describe the supply chain of the present invention as asserted in the Office Action.

The present invention instead describes systems and methods for monitoring status of orders in a supply chain comprising only the disparate trading partner systems involved in a transaction. In contrast to the order servicing systems of Postelnik, the Trading Partner Exchange of the present invention is not involved in order or transaction processing. Instead, the Trading Partner Exchange and the method in which it communicates with disparate trading partner systems allows the Trading Partner Exchange to operate as a centralized information warehouse for order status information rather than a transaction processing system, as required by Postelnik. In the present invention, the information reported to the Trading Partner Exchange allows a user to query a single system and determine the status of an order being processed by one or more trading partner systems in the supply chain rather than having to query multiple systems to ascertain order status. In essence the Trading partner exchange operates in parallel to the supply chain and as opposed to creating and processing orders for multiple trading partner systems as described in Postelnik. The present invention provides for processing order information, not the order itself as in Postelnik. The present invention processes order information by associating a unique identifier with a transaction for purposes of monitoring and recording all other actions associated with completion of the transaction as it flows through the supply chain, and by reporting them as requested by users.


Accordingly, Postelnik fails to teach or suggest every feature recited in independent claims 1 and 4. Applicants respectfully maintain, therefore, that independent Claims 1 and 4 both define over the prior art. Applicants further respectfully maintain that dependent Claims 2, 3, and 10-19, which each depend from one of the independent claims while reciting additional features, likewise define over the prior art.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that this Application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. The Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this response, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

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